

Washington, DC—Yesterday, the House of Representatives voted to support efforts that increase childhood cancer awareness, treatment and research. Congressman Joe Sestak (D-PA) was an original cosponsor of this resolution, H.Res. 470, which addresses the increasing rates of childhood cancer in this country. — This bill strikes a personal chord for the Congressman, whose daughter was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor two years ago. “I firmly believe that she is here today because of the early detection and high quality medical treatment she received,” said Representative Sestak. “This legislation will help other children in this nation to overcome this devastating disease.”

Over the past 20 years, the incidence of cancer among children has increased significantly. Approximately 9,510 children were diagnosed with cancer in 2005, making it the leading cause of death for children under 15. While the survival rate of children diagnosed with cancer has increased, two-thirds childhood cancer survivors suffer from the late-term effects of their treatment years later. This House Resolution calls for Congress to take action on this growing health issue. Specifically, the resolution asks for:

- (1) Efforts to promote awareness: Treatment is most effective when received in the early stages of the disease. This provision calls on Congress to support public education on the incidence about the incidence, symptoms, and treatment options of cancer among children.
- (2) Increased investment in childhood cancer research: Although environmental factors have long been suspected to be causes of cancer, the definitive causes of childhood cancers have been difficult to prove. More research is needed on the cause of the recent increase of childhood cancer, as well as on treatment options and their long-term side effects.
- (3) Incentives to encourage medical trainees and investigators to enter the field of pediatric oncology: As the incidence of childhood cancer increases, we must ensure that pediatric oncologists, who are specially trained in childhood cancer detection and treatment, are available to help children and their families cope with this disease.
- (4) Incentives to encourage the development of drugs and biologics designed to treat pediatric cancers: Shortages of drugs that fight childhood cancer have frustrated doctors and patients in recent years. In addition, existing drugs must be improved to lessen their side effects, and more effective new drugs for childhood cancer patients must be developed.
- (5) Policies that encourage participation in clinical trials: Researchers can best understand the disease and develop more effective drugs when volunteers participate in clinical trials.
- (6) Medical education curricula designed to improve pain management for childhood cancer patients: Children often react more strongly to physical pain than adults. Successful pain management enables young cancer patients to resume their normal lives, and can also help them heal faster.
- (7) Enhanced education, services, and other resources on effects from treatment: Many childhood cancer survivors suffer from late-term effects from treatments. Both children and their

families need to fully understand their treatment options in order to make the most informed decision.

“This resolution is an important step in combating childhood cancers,” said Congressman Sestak. “I will continue to work with my colleagues in the House of Representatives to enact policies that help childhood cancer patients and their families.”

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the Congress.